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Bet You Missed It-What do dissertations and biometric litigation have in common?

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Bet You Missed It

Press Clippings — In the News — Carefully Selected by Your Crack Staff of News Sleuths

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Editor's Note: Hey, are y'all reading this? If you know of an article that should be called to *Against the Grain's* attention ... send an email to <kstrauch@comcast.net>. We're listening! — **KS**

DANCE YOUR DISSERTATION

by **Bruce Strauch** (The Citadel, Emeritus)

STEM Ph.D. dissertation topics are real conversation stoppers. But weird, impenetrable research can translate into dance videos. If you go to YouTube, you can find hundreds of scientists are in on the fad with thousands of viewings.

Music of **Tchaikovsky** or Notorious B.I.G. Dancers playing photons, spermatocytes or Polio virus.

Musculoskeletal disorder: Hip-hop maneuvers to rewritten lyrics of "Good Vibrations" while wearing an NBA jersey. Disrupting the rewarding properties of nicotine: "Purple Rain" with a Bhangra-style dance. Discrete Representations of the Braids Groups: aerial dancers hang upside down creating braided loops to techno-club music.

And where did this come from? It's sponsored by *Science* magazine and the **American Association for the Advancement of Science**. With a \$500 prize.

See — **Melissa Korn**, "Your Ph.D. Thesis Sounds Funky! Let's Dance to It," *The Wall Street Journal*, Nov. 14, 2017, p.A1.

PEN VENOMOUS AS A RATTLESNAKE'S FANGS

by **Bruce Strauch** (The Citadel, Emeritus)

In myth, **Anne Royall** was the first female journalist to interview a president. She sat on **John Quincy Adams'** clothes while he was skinny-dipping, and he had to tread water and answer her questions.

Her life was worthy of the myth. Born in 1769, she was raised on the frontier in great hardship and privation. Her widowed mother became a maid for a wealthy man who opened his library for **Anne** and later married her. When he died, his family sued over his estate, and she found herself penniless again. She reinvented herself as an "itinerant storyteller."

She travelled the new nation writing a series of "Black Books," sardonic portraits of the rich and corrupt. She mocked the evangelicals of the Second Great Awakening, exposed corrupt land schemes and bank scandals.

Settling in Washington, she was next door to a firehouse where a Presbyterian church held services. This deeply offended her sense of the separation of church and state, and she railed and cursed at them from her window. She was arrested for being a common scold — *communis rixatrix* — a strictly female offense dating to the Middle Ages. The punishment was dunking, although the judge spared her that.

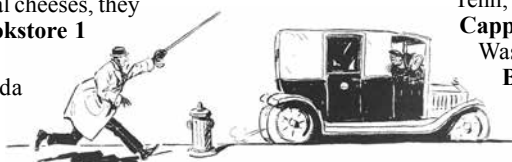
See — **Melanie Kirkpatrick** reviews **Jeff Briggers'** *The Trials of a Scold*, *The Wall Street Journal*, Nov. 3, 2017, p.A13.

SARASOTA INDIE

by **Bruce Strauch** (The Citadel, Emeritus)

WSJ travel section reviews the appeal of Sarasota, Florida. Along with the farm-to-table restaurants and artisanal cheeses, they get in a plug for independent bookseller **Bookstore 1** on Main Street.

See — **Alexander Lobrano**, "A Florida Beach Town With Snob Appeal," *The Wall Street Journal*, Jan. 20-21, 2018, p. D7.



LET'S READ ABOUT ADULTERY

by **Bruce Strauch** (The Citadel, Emeritus)

Evelyn Waugh, *A Handful of Dust* (1934) (this is **Waugh's** great one where the cuckolded husband ends up trapped by a lunatic on the Amazon endlessly reading aloud from Dickens); (2) **Ford Madox Ford**, *The Good Soldier* (1915) (wealthy British and American couples at German spa); (3) **Henry James**, *The Golden Bowl* (1904) (impoverished Roman prince and his no-money American lover each marry money and then continue their affair); (4) **Stendhal**, *The Red and the Black* (1830) (provincial aristocrat wife and the teenage tutor of her children); (5) **Guy de Maupassant**, *Like Death* (1889) (politician's wife has affair with portrait painter who in turn falls in love with her daughter).

See — **Anka Muhlstein**, "Five Best," *The Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 30-Oct. 1, 2017, p.C16.

Muhlstein is the author of *"The Pen and the Brush: How Passion for Art Shaped 19th-Century French Novels."*

BIOMETRIC LITIGATION

by **Bruce Strauch** (The Citadel, Emeritus)

So far, 13 million people have downloaded a Google Arts & Culture app to let its magic algorithm match their selfies to a historical work of art. But if you're in Illinois or Texas, no art match for you. Both states outlaw the collection of biometric data including "face geometry" without the owner's permission.

The app is only one of a mass of facial recognition tech products like iPhones that unlock to your face, doorbells that identify guests, and security cameras that spot recidivist shoplifters.

And the good news for lawyers is lawsuits are up in Illinois because under its statute individuals can sue. Other states only permit the attorneys general to do it.

But if selfie art lovers give their permission in the download, why is **Google** blocking it? It's a mystery. But the dangers of biometric collection include such things as a police state tracking its citizens as China does.

See — **Jack Nicas**, "Google Faces Off With Privacy Laws," *The Wall Street Journal*, Jan. 18, 2018, p.B1.

INDIE BOOKSTORES DOWN IN DIXIE

by **Bruce Strauch** (The Citadel, Emeritus)

Louisville celebrity chef **Edward Lee** has written *Smoke and Pickles* about the crossroads of Korean and Southern food. And he loves sleuthing for antique cookbooks in independent bookstores.

His faves: **Square Books of Oxford**, Miss.; **Faulkner House Books**, New Orleans, La.; **Burke's Book Store**, Memphis, Tenn.; **2nd Edition Booksellers**, Durham, NC; **Chop Suey Books**, Richmond, Va.; **Car-michael's Bookstore**, Louisville, Ky; **Parnassus Books**, Nashville, Tenn; **Turnrow Book Co**, Greenwood, Miss; **A Cappella Books**, Atlanta, Ga; **Politics and Prose**, Washington, DC; **Church Street Coffee and Books**, Birmingham, AL.

See — **Emily Storrow**, "Cookbook Worm," *Palate*, Oct. 2017, p.22.